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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 09/827,252 | 04/05/2001 | J. Charles Taylor | 39292/256238 | 5171 |
| 30559 | 7590 | 04/12/2007 | EXAMINER | |
| CHIEF PATENT COUNSEL SMITH & NEPHEW, INC. 1450 BROOKS ROAD MEMPHIS, TN 38116 | | | HO, UYEN T | |
| | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| | | | 3731 | |
| SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE | MAIL DATE | DELIVERY MODE | | |
| 3 MONTHS | 04/12/2007 | PAPER | | |

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | 09/827,252 | TAYLOR ET AL. | |
| Examiner | Art Unit | | |
| (Jackie) Tan-Uyen T. Ho | 3731 | | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 March 2007.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-14, 36-48 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-7, 9-14 and 36-42, 44-48 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 8, 43 and 44 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

1. Upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Blyakher (5,776,132).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-7, 9-14, 36-42, 45-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Blyakher (5,776,132). Blyakher discloses a plurality of plates (10) and in one embodiment shown in figure 2, the plate being in shape of a ring and including 36 radially spaced apertures. Although, Blyakher does not clearly indicated that the apertures are evenly spaced but indicated that the physicians count the holes/apertures on the ring in order to align the rings before placing connecting rods in symmetrical distances along the perimeter (col. 3, lines 58-65). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the apertures/holes of Blyakher's plates evenly spaced in order to enhance the degree of symmetry in the placement of the assembled rings/plates.

4. Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blyakher as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Cook (5,275,598).

Blyakher fails to disclose the attachment structure being pegs or clamps, it is well known in the art to have the pegs or clamps place in the attachment holes in order to secure the wires, for example, Cook discloses pegs or clamps in form of nut and pin (232, 234, 242, 244) for securing the wires. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include pegs or nut and pin in order to secure the wires to the plates/rings.

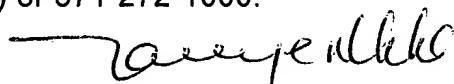
Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 8, 43, 44 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Blyakher fails to disclose the fixation system comprising six struts in combination with all the limitations of the claims.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to (Jackie) Tan-Uyen T. Ho whose telephone number is 571-272-4696. The examiner can normally be reached on MULTIFLEX Mon. to Sat..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, ANHTUAN NGUYEN can be reached on 571-272-4963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



(Jackie) Tan-Uyen T. Ho
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3731

April 9, 2007